

Climate-Friendly Product Labeling

California should investigate a labeling program for California Climate-Friendly products. One possible model is the Energy Star program, although the Climate-Friendly program would cover the entire product lifecycle including production.

- *Time Frame:* By 2009
- *GHG Reduction Potential:* not estimated
- *Ease of Implementation:* The labeling program would require a moderate level of effort to design. Ease of implementation would depend on program scope.
- *Co-Benefits / Mitigation Requirements:* Granting preferences for California Climate-Friendly products could lessen "leakage" of production to areas that are not taking effective action. It will also promote public awareness of climate change, climate solutions, and the California entities that are stepping forward to be a part of the solution.
- *Responsible Parties:* CARB and/or State Legislature, Trade Associations, California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

Problem: California is a national leader in promoting climate solutions but potential compliance costs may, in some cases, impose competitive disadvantage to entities that compete with unregulated out-of-state businesses. In addition, residents have responded well to efforts such as recycling, but lack information about the GHG effects of consumer choices. Unverified manufacturer claims may lack accuracy and credibility with consumers.

Possible Solution: At present, motor vehicles sold in California already have a smog index label.ⁱ GHG emissions information will also become part of this label by 2009. CARB and/or the State Legislature may want to consider further labeling efforts of energy supplies such as transportation fuels, as well as the emissions that were produced in making or shipping consumer goods. These efforts could also be pursued cooperatively through partnerships such as the Western Climate Initiative, where sub-national governments in North America work together to address Climate Change.

As a greater range of choices of vehicles, fuels, and other consumer choices become available to consumers, it will become important to provide information to consumers so that they make educated choices to reduce GHG emissions. Consumer education on environmentally friendly technologies or habits has worked in California; both the State *Flex Your Power* campaign and Federal *Energy Star* labeling program have proved effective in shrinking energy usage. The State should also actively seek to expand public education, and outreach programs in conjunction with labeling efforts, and could also promote purchasing climate-friendly products. This type of program will require monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment to make sure it is effective.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ <http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/labeling/labeling.htm>

ⁱⁱ Morgenstern, R. D. and W. A. Pizer *Reality Check: The Nature and Performance of Voluntary Environmental Programs in the United States, Europe, and Japan*. Washington, DC, RFF Press (2007)..

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